

STATE OF UTAH

Waiver Request

WIA Definitions; Low-Income Individual, and Out-of-School Youth Workforce Investment Act, Program Year 2004

History. Utah's Lieutenant Governor, Olene Walker, assumed the post of Governor from Mike Leavitt when he joined President Bush's Cabinet as Director of the EPA. Governor Walker created "Walker's Work Plan" to guide her, and the State while she's at the helm. One of Governor Walker's initiatives is Transition to Adult Living-TAL, an initiative to improve services and outcomes for youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, and youth leaving the juvenile corrections system. (See section titled, "Outcomes of Youth Transitioning From Foster Care," on pages 2 – 6 below). TAL merges nicely with WIA target populations and service expectations after WIA re-authorization. Youth in foster care and juvenile corrections are mentioned in the House of Representatives version of re-authorization, H.R. 1261, and youth from the juvenile justice system are mentioned in the Senate versions of re-authorization, S.1627. This initiative provides a means for Utah to get a 'head start' on re-authorization, and, more importantly, targeting these vulnerable populations is the right thing to do. This initiative holds a dominant place in the Department of Workforce Services Strategic Plan.

Mike Richardson, DWS Service Delivery Support Director, and Richard Anderson, Department of Child and Family Services Director are co-chairing the Transition to Adult Living Implementation Team. DCFS applied for and was granted assistance from the National Governor's Association Policy Academy to assist with the TAL initiative. DWS's participation involves detailed collaboration with DCFS, by including WIA youth services in the initiative.

A TAL pilot project in the DWS North Region has begun. Harold Hess, the North Regional Director has decided to reserve 50% of available WIA youth "slots" for youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, and youth leaving the juvenile corrections system. His recommendation is endorsed by both Regional Youth Councils in the North Region, and will be taken to the State Youth Council and State Council for approval at the quarterly meeting, 07/15/04.

The lessons learned from the pilot project will be delivered to the rest of the State for implementation during Program Year 2004. The difficulty this presents to the WIA youth service delivery system is that it increases the struggle to meet the 30% WIA youth expenditure requirement on out-of-school youth. The agreements, pathways, communication, data collection, and staff awareness is being accomplished to help meet the improved outcomes for these youth. The waiver will complete the full support needed for the initiative's success as thus making WIA a full partner in the solution.

Statutory Waiver Request: Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) seeks a statewide waiver on the definitions for Low-Income Individual and Out-of School Youth be changed to reflect the high level of interagency collaboration occurring in Utah, and to benefit the youth represented in the TAL initiative. The altered language is in ***bold italics*** below:

- 1) WIA law, Section 101 (25), defines a low-income individual as, "(25) Low-income individual.--The term ``low-income individual" means an individual who—
 - (A) receives, or is a member of a family that receives, cash payments under a Federal, State, or local income-based public assistance program;
 - (B) received an income, or is a member of a family that received a total family income, for the 6-month period prior to application for the program involved (exclusive of unemployment compensation, child support payments, payments described in subparagraph (A), and old-age and survivors insurance benefits received under section

202 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402)) that, in relation to family size, does not exceed the higher of—

- (i) the poverty line, for an equivalent period; or
 - (ii) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level, for an equivalent period;
- (C) is a member of a household that receives (or has been determined within the 6-month period prior to application for the program involved to be eligible to receive) food stamps pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);
- (D) qualifies as a homeless individual, as defined in subsections (a) and (c) of section 103 of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302);
- (E) is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made, *(or has reached the age of eighteen and has been determined within the 60 month period prior to application for the program involved, to be a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made)*; or
- (F) in cases permitted by regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Labor, is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the requirements of a program described in subparagraph (A) or of subparagraph (B), but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet such requirements.
- 2) The other recommendation relates to the definition of out-of-school youth. WIA law, Section 101 (33), defines Out-of-school youth as, “(33) Out-of-school youth.--The term “out-of-school youth” means—
- (A) an eligible youth who is a school dropout; or
 - (B) an eligible youth who has received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed.
- Utah recommends the following addition,
- (C) is a foster child, or youth offender, regardless of actual secondary school status.*

Benefit. To reach the goal of the TAL initiative to improve the outcomes for these young citizens, it is believed that the current statute does not allow DWS to fully serve the disadvantaged youth aging out of foster care and youth offenders. The waiver will allow Utah to:

- Expand the low-income definition to include youth who have “aged” out of foster care. This provides a means to serve a population who is desperately needy, (according to the outcome data below), and
- Expand the out-of school youth definition to include youth in foster care and offenders, regardless of their secondary school status. This provides a means to serve these youth without limiting access because of the requirement to spend at least 30% of WIA funds on Out-of School Youth.

Outcomes – Current and Expected:

Current Outcomes of Youth Transitioning From Foster Care Demonstrating the Need to Act Date of Report—05/05/2004

To develop base line information about the current functioning of youth who transitioned from foster care between 1999 and 2004.

Sample

The study sample included 774 (454 females, 320 males) youth.

Data Collection Methods

Information was obtained from computer systems of the Department of Human Services, Department of Workforce Services, Department of Health, and Department of Public Safety. Data from public and higher education will be obtained at a later date. The information was integrated into a single database and analyzed across multiple dimensions. Data was limited to youth who reside in the state of Utah. We are unable to obtain information on youth who have moved to another state.

Outcome Variables

The outcome variables that were measured include:

- Wages
- Criminal activity
- Utilization of public assistance
- Child-bearing
- Death rate
- Child support
- Follow-up services

Wages

- The wages reported in Table 1 below represent the average quarterly wages reported by the Department of Workforce Services.
- Wages were reported for 75 percent of the youth.
- Males had significantly higher wages than females.
- The 2004 HHS Poverty Guidelines indicate the annual income of a single individual living at the poverty level is \$9,310 (\$2,327 per quarter).
- Youth who have been out of foster care for 5 years are still living below the poverty level. On average, females who left care in 1999 are living at 59 percent of the poverty level while males are living at 99 percent of the poverty level.
- The low wages reflect the difficulties many of these youth experience in earning an adequate wage to support themselves and obtain economic success.

Table 1: Average Quarterly Wages Reported by the Department of Workforce Services

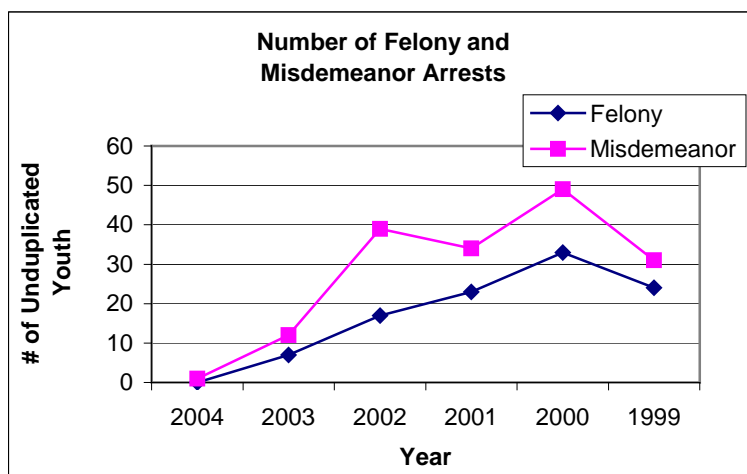
Year		Female	Male	Total
1999	Unduplicated Youth	57	52	109
	Average Wage	1,375.48	2,307.58	1,716.46
2000	Unduplicated Youth	103	79	182
	Average Wage	1,503.01	1,537.68	1,513.05
2001	Unduplicated Youth	92	58	150
	Average Wage	1,225.93	1,451.68	1,291.61
2002	Unduplicated Youth	106	58	164
	Average Wage	868.71	1,155.64	936.53
2003	Unduplicated Youth	79	64	143
	Average Wage	921.09	965.94	939.78
2004	Unduplicated Youth	17	9	26
	Average Wage	619.36	1,211.41	791.25

Criminal Activity

- Thirty-five percent of the youth were arrested for a felony or a misdemeanor; 21 percent were arrested for a misdemeanor and 14 percent were arrested for a felony.
- Except for the youth who left foster care in 1999, the criminal activity of youth tends to increase over time.

Table 2: Number of Felony and Misdemeanor Arrests

Year	Felony	Misdemeanor	Total
1999	24	31	55
2000	33	49	82
2001	23	34	57
2002	17	39	56
2003	7	12	19
2004	0	1	1
TOTAL	104	166	270



Public Assistance

- Fifty-eight percent (450) of the youth have received some type of public assistance.
- Food stamps are the most utilized service – 43 percent of the youth have received food stamps.

Table 3: Utilization of Public Assistance

Program	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Child Care	12	29	11	7	4	1	64
Disabled Medicaid	10	10	13	5	6	1	45
Family medical	17	43	23	16	7	2	108
Food Stamps	51	98	73	56	56	2	336
General Assistance	14	23	24	18	10	0	89
Newborn Medical	1	1	3	24	23	0	52
Pre-natal Medical	21	43	32	31	15	0	142
Primary Care Network	25	26	37	23	10	0	121

TANF Financial	14	46	19	17	9	1	106
Total Services Utilized	165	319	235	197	140	7	1,063

Child Bearing

- The birth rate for females who left foster care in the last five years is 2.79 times the rate for females in the general population. Over 32 percent of the former female foster youth have had a child.
- Only 9 percent of the males have fathered a child.

Table 4: Female Birth Rate: Age 18-24

Female Population	Number of Births	Population of Females	Birth Rate per 1,000
General Population	90,767	782,732	115.96
Former Foster Youth	147	454	323.78

Death Rate

- Three males who transitioned from foster care in the last 5 years have died – 2 from suicide and one as a result of a traffic accident. Although these numbers are small, they present a significantly greater death rate than for youth in the general population. The suicide rate for former foster youth is 17 times higher than the rate for the general population and the death rate from accidents 4 times higher than the general population.
- The primary cause of death for the general population is accidents followed by suicide. The reverse is true for youth transitioning from foster care.

Table 5: Death Rate: Age 18-24

Population	# of Suicides	Suicide Rate/100,000	# of Accidents	Accident Rate/100,000
General Population (1,539,227)	237	15.4	484	31.44
Former Foster Youth (774)	2	258.4	1	129.2

Child Support

- Nineteen percent of the females and 5 percent of males who transitioned from foster care have received child support from the Office of Recovery Services.
- Twenty-one (3 percent) former foster youth are paying child support to the Office of Recovery because their child is placed in foster care.

Implications

- Despite the best efforts of caseworkers, educators, foster parents and others, many of the youth transitioning from foster care have poor outcomes and are struggling to be self-supporting adults.
- The good news is that many of the outcome variables can be addressed by targeting comprehensive and coordinated services in the following areas:
 - Job training and employment
 - Post secondary education and training
 - Improved reading and math skills
 - Pregnancy prevention
 - Access to health and mental health services

WIA Outcomes Among Targeted Youth

While WIA has not specifically targeted youth in these Utah populations before, a number of participants are former foster care and juvenile corrections youth. Accordingly, MIS has attempted to calculate outcomes for these sub-groups.

Utah WIA I-B Performance Measures - Youth			Program Year Cycle		Below 80% of Planned Level				
DOL Report Quarter: PY03 - Q2			UI Wage Match Cycle		Between 80% to 100% of Planned Level				
Data Run: 3/15/2004									
			Utah PY02	Utah PY03	UTAH OUTCOMES				
#	Measure	Timeframe	Planned Level	Planned Level	All Youth	Foster Child	Non-Foster Child	Offender	Non-Offender
09	Older Youth Entered Employment	10/1/2002 - 3/31/2003	63.0%	65.0%	82.6%			100.0%	78.9%
10	Older Youth Employment Retention	10/1/2001 - 9/30/2002	80.0%	80.8%	83.0%			66.7%	85.1%
11	Older Youth Earnings Change	10/1/2001 - 9/30/2002	\$3,071	\$2,400	\$2,741			\$1,231	\$2,934
12	Older Youth Credential	10/1/2002 - 3/31/2003	52.0%	45.0%	57.1%			75.0%	54.2%
13	Younger Youth Skill Attainment	7/1/2003 - 12/31/2003	85.0%	89.0%	87.8%	91.9%	86.8%	88.9%	87.4%
14	Younger Youth Diploma Attainment	7/1/2003 - 9/30/2003	45.0%	51.0%	77.6%	76.9%	77.8%	70.0%	81.6%
15	Younger Youth Retention	10/1/2001 - 9/30/2002	52.0%	55.0%	71.1%	81.3%	69.6%	68.8%	71.9%
16	Participant Satisfaction - VMA	7/1/2003 - 9/30/2003	76.00	76.80	70.00	63.00	69.00	61.00	73.00
17	Employer Satisfaction	7/1/2003 - 9/30/2003	76.00	76.80	73.00	73.00	73.00	73.00	73.00
Total O Participants		7/1/2003 - 12/31/2003			294			66	228
Total Y Participants		7/1/2003 - 12/31/2003			1042	147	895	249	793
Total O Exiters		7/1/2003 - 9/30/2003			36			12	24
Total Y Exiters		7/1/2003 - 9/30/2003			135	26	109	48	87

The above chart indicates that the youth-offender population does not have lower rates of entered employment; however, rates of retention and earnings change are significantly lower than for non-offender youth. Likewise, skill attainment rates for younger youth are not lower but employment retention rates are notably less.

It should be noted that the WIA outcomes summary above is based on case management notations in the file and are not based on actual matches with the DCFC system. A more complete match may reveal different outcomes. Further, *indicators of status as a former foster child are not available; therefore, complete analysis of outcomes for former foster care youth in the Older Youth program is not possible.*

Expected Outcomes:

It is the expectation of the TAL initiative partners to improve the outcomes of the foster care and correction youth to at a minimum meet the same success of youth not disadvantaged by being part of foster care and/or corrections systems.

Monitoring:

DWS will monitor the outcomes for these youth as compared to other youth enrolled in WIA services. Data will be collected for the reporting outcomes for WIA services. For the purposes of these waivers, the youth impacted by the waivers will be reviewed to observe their achievements as the waiver group compared to the whole group.

Local Board and Public Comment:

Requirements to inform and allow comment from the Local Boards and public have been met according to 661.420, (c), iii and iv. This Waiver Request will be placed on the DWS Internet site at <http://jobs.utah.gov>, and announced as a Public Notice in the following Utah newspapers for a thirty day comment period beginning 07/12/04:

- Salt Lake Tribune
- Deseret News
- Ogden Standard Examiner
- Provo Herald